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OBITUARY NOTICE OF THE LATE JAMES COPLAND, M. D.

Read by Dr. William Pepper, before the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Nov. 21, 1870.

It would be amiss to occupy any large share of the time of the Society by a lengthy eulogy upon the wise man, whose death has furnished the occasion of my remarks; yet in some respects the life of James Copland presented more of variety and vicissitude than falls to the lot of most students or practitioners of medicine. He was born in the Orkney Islands in November, 1791, and was the eldest of nine children. His early education was conducted at Lerwick, one of the Shetland Islands, but at the early age of sixteen, having decided to adopt the profession of medicine, he repaired to the justly renowned University of Edinburgh, where he continued four years. In 1815, at the age of twenty-four, having obtained his diploma, he turned his footsteps towards London, following the example of a long list of distinguished predecessors. It is certainly strong testimony to the high standard of requirements, the great educational facilities, and the distinguished abilities of the Faculty at the University of Edinburgh, during the latter half of the last century, that so many of her graduates attained the highest eminence. It was to this school that we owed our own Kuhn, Rush, Morgan, Shippen, Wistar, and Physick, and many of the most successful and distinguished Physicians in London had migrated there from Edinburgh. Of all these eminent men not one sought the metropolis with a better equipment of vigorous health, strong and well trained mental powers, and indefatigable energy than Copland.

Still he did not succeed in establishing himself there immediately, but within a few months after his arrival in London, crossed the channel to Paris, and spent two years in study at the French and German schools. Upon his return to London in 1817, he became one of the Health officers of the African Company, and spent twelve months on the Gold Coast. While there both his own exceptionally robust constitution and wide experience in the treatment of fever and dysentery, underwent a severe trial, for not only was he obliged to treat and nurse almost the entire ship's crew in an attack of yellow fever, but, after accomplishing this arduous duty, he was himself seized and was dangerously ill. He subsequently returned to England, but after paying a brief visit to his Orcadian home, he again crossed to France and spent some months in attendance on the Parisian Hospitals.

It was not until 1820 that Copland, at the age of twenty-nine years, finally settled in London, and commenced an unbroken course of fifty years' laborious study and practice. From this time his success was steady and uniform. In 1820 he was appointed Physician to the Royal Infirmary for Diseases of Children, a post which he subsequently changed for Senior and finally for that of Consulting Physician. In 1823 he was elected Consulting Physician to Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital. He was also sometime Physician to the South London Dispensary. His practice in-

creased quite rapidly, and for many years before his death was among the largest and most lucrative in London. The professional honors which he received were numerous and distinguished. In 1833 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society; in 1837 a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; in 1838 he was Gulstonian Lecturer; in 1841, 1842, and 1861 he was Censor of the College; Croonian Lecturer in 1844, 1845, 1846; seven times Councillor between 1844 and 1863; Lumleian Lecturer in 1854 and 1855; and Harveian orator in 1857; in 1853 he was elected President of the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society. He was also honored by being made a member of many learned societies out of England; and in Jan. 17, 1845, was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia.

Despite, however, the arduous practical duties of his profession he was indefatigable in literary labors. He edited the "London Medical Repository" for five years from 1822 to 1827, and contributed to it a vast number of articles. He also edited Richerard's Physiology in 1824; contributed notes to Griffith's translation of Cuvier's "Animal Kingdom;" assisted in the preparation of Annesely's magnificent work on the Diseases of India, to such an extent that it is stated by one well informed that he may be considered its author. His occasional articles are too numerous to mention, but the great work of his life was his colossal "Dictionary of Practical Medicine." The idea of such an enterprise occupied his attention as early as 1827, and he then issued a prospectus of a plan for bringing out an "Encyclopedial Dictionary of Medical Science." The undertaking was not accepted by the publishers, however, though they subsequently entered into an arrangement with Drs. Forbes, Conolly, and Tweedie, which resulted in the publication of an excellent Medical Encyclopedia.

Copland was not to be thus thwarted in his plan, and accordingly in 1830 he began, single-handed and unaided, the task of writing a similar work. The first part of this truly great work appeared in 1832, and others followed in regular succession, so that the greater part of it was published in the first three years, though the last two parts composing the Dictionary did not make their appearance until 1860, twenty-eight years after the first part. The entire work comprises about 7,000 closely printed double-columned royal octavo pages. The success of this publication was immediate and marked. Over 10,000 copies of the English edition were sold, it was reprinted in America and translated into German. It has also been reissued in an abridged form under the editorship of his nephew, Mr. James C. Copland. It is no exaggeration to say that but few more colossal literary works have ever been achieved by any author. The number and variety of the articles are only equaled by the profound erudition and great practical knowledge which they evince, and the vigor and clearness of the style in which they are composed. One of the most important features of the work, and which has endeared it to every true medical student, is the copious and exhaustive Bibliography appended to every article in the Dictionary. In the preparation of these Bibliographic lists, the acquirements and wide range of reading of Copland are conspicuous. The work has served as a

mine from which countless medical workers have extracted precious materials, which they have, in but too many instances, reissued without the stamp of the original and real author. Doubtless many of the theories and views expressed in it will be, ere long, superseded; many of the facts require rearrangement or new explanation; but the work itself will long live and command the admiration of posterity as an enduring monument to the great intellect, sustained ambition, and indomitable energy of James Copland.

In person he was about the common height, of a robust build and striking countenance. In social life he possessed many friends, and was of a most generous and hospitable nature.

For some years before his death he had retired from the active practice of his profession. He had suffered for a long time from gout, and for some years had had occasional attacks of rheumatism. His death occurred on July 12, 1870, in the 79th year of his age, after a severe illness of about ten days.

Mr. Dubois made the following written communication respecting Lake Superior Silver Mines.

Mr. Du Bois asks attention to a specimen of ore from the new silver-mining region on the northern shore of Lake Superior. The precise location of the mine is on a very small island, about half a mile from the main land near Thunder Cape, to the east of Thunder Bay, and north of Isle Royale. Silver Island only measures a few feet long and broad, out of the water, and it was necessary first to fence it with a coffer dam: it is still necessary to use the pump daily. They are now at work a few feet below the bed of the lake.

Herewith two specimens are shown; one is the ore (in two pieces); the other is a button of fine silver extracted from precisely the same amount of ore. The comparison will give an idea of its surprising richness, and will also show how much may be hidden under an exterior not promising to a casual observer.

The matrix is a calcareous spar, or carbonate of lime, with granular galena; the silver occurs in two conditions: mineralized in the galena, and native in small needle-shaped filaments, some of them visible with a glass. The return of this specimen was over \$13,000 a ton; but as we are cautious of reporting such ores by such large measure, we gave it as \$6.73 a *pound*. However, it turns out that they are really getting up tons of rich ore, and sending it to be smelted at Newark, New Jersey. Other specimens tried at the Mint yield about half as much as the extraordinary piece here shown.

That Lake Superior should thus offer on its northern shore a bed of silver associated with lead; and on its southern shore a mixture of silver with copper, as well as copper alone; is an interesting fact in mineralogy. That it should promise us more silver, at a time when we want it for currency, is equally interesting in another point of view.

The mine, although in Canada, is owned and worked by a company of our citizens, of Detroit and other places.

Prof. Henry made a verbal communication of the doings of the International Commissioners who assembled at Paris last summer, to consider a revision of the French metre.

Mr. Cuyler offered the following Preamble and Resolutions:—

WHEREAS, The Building now owned and occupied by this Society has ceased to be central and convenient, and has also the disadvantage of affording only imperfect and unsafe accommodations to its Library and other valuable properties; whilst those who desire to consult its Books and Manuscripts have not proper conveniences for that purpose; and,

WHEREAS, It has been suggested that it may be practicable to enlarge the field of usefulness of this Society by adding to its other offices that of providing for and controlling the Observatory (both Astronomical and Meteorological), and for the Study and Recording of such other natural phenomena as may be appropriately observed and investigated in connection with such an Institution, and that for these purposes the removal of the Society from its present location, and its re-establishment in Fairmount Park, is desirable and practicable, therefore be it

Resolved, That the President be, and he is hereby, authorized and requested to appoint two Special Committees, each of which shall consist of a Chairman and four other members, and with each of which Committees the President is requested to meet and act as an additional member.

Resolved, That to one of these Committees shall be entrusted the duty of digesting the plan for such an Observatory as is described in the Preamble, so far as, in their judgment, it is expedient this Society should undertake the work of its establishment, and that they be requested also to describe such instruments as it is requisite should be provided for use therein, and an estimate of their cost, together with an estimate of the probable annual expense of maintaining and conducting such an Institution.

Resolved, That the other Committee shall be charged with the duty of considering the financial questions which are involved in such changes as are contemplated by the Preamble and the preceding Resolutions, and of reporting to the Society how the funds requisite for such an undertaking can be provided.

Dr. Carson moved that the further consideration of the Preamble and Resolutions offered by Mr. Cuyler, be postponed to a special meeting of the Society, to be held on the evening of the second Friday in December, notice of which should be given to all the members of the Society, with a printed copy of the Preamble and Resolutions; which was ordered.

And the Society was adjourned.